

Tesoro,  
Meaning Sweetheart

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and a constant  $12 + ,12$ .

The 21 Stages of the Dew:

Please be aware that for all technical support purposes, we will do what is expected of us.

New orders and bestsellers are an important part of our business.

This computer will be replaced when it is no longer useful.

First, let's start with a simple and straight-forward example.

"What is hanging over us now is not just death, but the way we use that death to make a point, to make a point on the world," she told the House in 2010, "because when we get so used to killing each other that we turn things around and make the other person a symbol of death."

However, his speech wasn't perfect.

All systems fail eventually, and the greater melancholy of a single death can bring people to their knees.

But, obviously, i'm joking. These things are not of the real world. Instead, we can assemble them into a kind of imaginary model, where the structure bends based on our individual needs and desires.

We talk of sex when we talk of death. We talk of sex when we talk of the future.

I refuse to believe this is everything.

At the end of the world, will we be looking at each other or our enemies? Our own family or our own nation? At the end of the world, will we be looking at the people we have created in our own image?

The seductive promise of the apocalypse has always been kissing my lips.

In an autobiographical zigzag:

I'm going to take an interest in his works and I can't talk about it without explaining what I've been doing. I don't get any pleasure in doing so. I have a lot of ideas about what I've been doing in my life. My ideas are not mine. I don't want to write all my pieces. I'm just interested in what I've been doing. I think the most important thing is that it's not just me, I'm the only one who is interested in the work that I'm doing.

Being self-aware, there are many ways for you to take the subject matter seriously. The idea of self-pity can have some kind of magical power when it comes to what I'm doing. I believe in myself as the person who is doing the writing and the other part of the job, so what's happening to you is a bit weird.

This is very much a work of fiction. I'm not going to describe him as a writer.

The bold conspiracy theories have not been revealed. I'm going to use this.

Now here's the punchline: You might want to read the book.  
There is nothing I can do.

I'm starting to believe in punishment, even if it's just a little bit, but you have to think, I'll make this one up, that I'll do it for me. When I say that I need to stop this madness, it's a great thing to be able to say that there's something in the air. Completely understandable, though. What are the words you're giving me, and are you saying? I've had an interesting conversation with you in the past, so if you really thought that was going to be okay, please don't tell me about it. Someone's looking into my character's feelings and not me. I don't always cause problems, or anything. Anything happens to me when I tell you anything, or any other person. I don't want to have to worry about it because I just have to let it happen and see what I can do as I've got it and then let it happen and have something good happen.

Unfortunately, this is only the beginning.  
I hope I can finally have some other ideas to talk about.

And while cherry-picking these masterpieces, he stumbled across one that wasn't so easy to take. It was a Modigliani painting called 'The Woman With Blue Eyes.' He began walking toward it as the evening's grand finale, but something stopped him — something he described as the painting "talking" to him. He recalls the women in the painting saying to him, "You'll regret it for the rest of your life." He left it behind.

2. A "river of diamonds," a diamond necklace.
3. The expression now offensive and obsolete in restaurants and bars.
4. In Russian, "nosik" ("little nose").

His wife opposed his taking the job. But his mentor told him that, if his government asked him to do something, and if he could "be effective" in its execution, then he should do it. So far today, it looks like he's taking that advice again.

Exploding head syndrome (EHS) is a condition in which a person experiences unreal noises that are loud and of short duration when falling asleep or waking up.[4][2] The noise may be frightening, typically occurs only occasionally, and is not a serious health concern.[2] People may also experience a flash of light.[5] Pain is typically absent.[2]

As this is my hypothesis, we will not trouble ourselves with whether this is historically accurate - we will construct 'a meaningful story' from these fragments.

A series introduces a character as sweet and lovable, more comic relief than anything, who likes nothing more than to pet little puppies. They make you adore them, root for them and love them.

The more beautiful and pure a thing is, the more satisfying it is to corrupt it.

New media warps my recollection of previously consumed content.  
I dreamt of the future by thinking of the past.



At the beginning of this fantasy, I imagine you've read at least one of my previous books.

This book is about nothing, nothing you can hold onto, nothing ever appears. The plot resolves into nothing and features no genuine emotional suffering. I'm not talking about anything real.

The average novel is approximately 60,000 words, which is 165 words per day for a year. This sounds reasonable until you realize you have to put the words in the correct order.

"I need Jared Tobek's agent," I think, stopping to sip my decaf cappuccino while I wait for my 7:30 sensory deprivation appointment.

"I need to focus," I think, immediately after ejaculating a black Marc Jacobs t-shirt.

I would listen to recordings of Ginsberg reading 'America' on repeat - memorizing the words, but focusing on his cadence. How he speaks, when he pauses. I learned how to pause for applause.

A group of white women at the slutwalk sing along to Chief Keef, Kanye West, Pusha T, Big Sean, and Jadakiss' 2012 hit 'I Don't Like (Remix)' as it blares from the leading pink pace car. They all say the 'n' word when the lyrics require it. They use a soft 'a' instead of a hard 'r.' They all get a pass and are welcomed as heroes on the Facebook timeline.

"I'll never write a preachy piece," I think.

My agent demands a cultural thinkpiece on Soundcloud hip-hop in the suburbs. Music like Brockhampton - domestic, clean, inoffensive, kinda white. I don't have anything to say about it. I don't really care. I'm a long way from their target audience. I also just do not care.

Another white woman says the 'n' word - again, soft 'a' - singing along to Lauryn Hill's 'Doo Wop (That Thing)' at a karaoke night. Everyone thinks she did a good job.

I'm going through a depressive period. Nothing's wrong, i'm just down. All the way down. I'm too depressed to read, write, ride my bike, or cook dinner. I order delivery and watch the Sopranos. I do this for three days straight. I feel guilty but there is nothing I can do about it.

This morning I rode my bike for 35km and forgot to shower afterwards. How do you forget to shower? I guess i'm still depressed. I run my errands smelling like a brewery on fire.

"I'll shower after my appointment," I think. "I'll shower in a while."

I keep my eyes on the bike lane as I walk, spotting a nice Pinarello heading north. I notice all the fashion fixies have brakes this year. People got soft. People don't trust themselves. Riding brakeless is about instinct and awareness. Riding brakeless is a great mental exercise. I must be smarter than everyone because I still ride brakeless.

I go home and shave. I book a hair appointment. I brush my teeth in the shower. All of these normal things exhaust me. Self-care.

The bartender locks eyes with his girl of the night or whatever, flipping the cocktail shaker without breaking eye contact. This is really easy to do, but it's impressive if you're impressed by that sort-of thing. He suggests a tiki drink - something fruity, bright, boozy. You ask, again, for a gin and tonic - still tipping %20.

I can't resist a chance to drag Twitter activism. Someone will eventually interrupt me to declare that it does work - remember the Arab Spring? I do, but not well enough to continue the conversation without checking wikipedia first.

"I don't give a shit about American politics," she said.  
"It's, like, reality TV for the boys."

At each stage, we stack sacrifice onto sacrifice.  
Stockpiling anxiety, and bankrolling the issues and problems into the same pocket you withdraw from.

Needing medicine.

Am I making sense?

The world owes me something nice.

I have an ingenious plan - one that extolls the virtue of hard work, without actually putting the time in.

Perhaps i'm describing a scam.

In December 5,000 ,2012 cashers in 20 countries withdrew 5\$ million, 400,000\$ in 700 transactions from 140 New York ATMs, in 150 minutes.

Shift work sleep disorder (SWSD) is a circadian rhythm sleep disorder characterized by insomnia and excessive sleepiness affecting people whose work hours overlap with the typical sleep period.

I'm getting distracted.

This is a bit like a Choose Your Own Adventure book.

Can you imagine?

You'll find that virtually all kingpins either get murdered or go to prison.  
Let that sink in, and find a good lawyer.

All money is fake, especially fake internet money.

A barium swallow and meal is a type of X-ray test.

Using reputation to intimidate.  
Maybe using someone else's biography.

The muse strikes like lightning.

Impaling myself on the rocks of a three-act structure.

A-ha!

Do try to stay safe while breaking the law.  
Success to crime!

Depending on your symptoms, you may need to have a combination of tests to get a diagnosis.

A great deal of severe manual work must be reward for an average man.

An idea for a psychological thriller: who bakes for the baker?  
It could set during any era.

I don't remember, like - I lost time.

Hacking? What are you looking for?

Trees, birds, drizzle - it's a nice kind of interlude.

A scene built on agreement.

Side-wise-grand-unified-theory-book-level-intelligence-perception-cafe-dialog.

I'm doing the work!

If I water the plants and shower and shave and do my emails and run with the dog and do the dishes and take out the trash - if I do this before you wake up, maybe i'll make you breakfast.

There is always one thing left to do before doing the things you would actually like to do.

Today, I have to wait for the contractor to review the balcony railing. This is a matter of real concern, as we are twenty floors up - so I wait. I wait, not really doing work but sandwiched between two Macbooks. I'm looking at a forum devoted to finding the source of porn ads and drinking instant coffee. The house looks like a cool, smart person lives here.

Perhaps none of my habits are good habits.

I am more like my mother than I would like to admit.

We chase the dragon of love and affection.

We are never fulfilled with what we get.

I'm terrified to travel because i'm scared of losing what little I have at home.

I haven't conquered a to-do list in a while.

I just add new ideas the the one big .docx file that never gets worked on.

I do remember to buy kitty litter.

Yet, here I am - in my 30's, hurriedly eating a slice of pizza while I speed walk to work - and I do this three times a week.

I could, realistically, stock my house with 'ready to go' snacks. I could make the effort to go to the grocery store - but I wont. There are other things i'd rather do. I eat for utility, and I hate watching the arugula turn brown and wilt.

I need to hurry up and get back to work.

I know my time is short, I know I really cannot sustain my lifestyle while being a freelancer that takes no freelance jobs. I have to see everything myself. I have to do it myself. I have to be out and get drunk and into trouble because this is the way I get work done.

I agonize over these ideas I will never execute, books I won't write, but there truly is not enough time. I prioritize being a good provider and a good partner in this new life, which puts me lower on the pyramid. It's not just about me anymore. It's nice to work hard and not worry (too much) about paying the rent and buying dinner. Writing poems about livestreaming my suicide on 4chan isn't a tangible currency - yet.

Poems don't buy me Starbucks.

My finest poem is paying the bills.

Everything is a headache and there is no Advil in my pocket.  
I do not want to argue, drink booze, or be awake.

I need to lay down.

Every day is boring before it begins.

I still find myself wanting to buy shoes. That new shoe smell, yeah.

Rimbaud? No?

I'm sorry, I wasn't listening.

I'm aware that I'm just passing the time.

Maybe if I went on vacation, go experience something new -  
really find myself, ha ha ha.

Who goes looking for themselves? What the fuck am I saying?  
I need to look in the mirror. That's it, that's all.

I intended on documenting all my revenge fantasies, but I'm not that  
angry anymore.

I feel everything as ambient temperature shifts. I had it coming.

On Monday, I will sit and enjoy the house. play some records, watch TV,  
read. normal person stillness. idle time.

On Tuesday, the house will have become suffocating again and I will have  
to escape.

The kid in the kitchen keeps looking at his cell phone data plan usage.

And here we are, a new morning - I have got to shut up!

I don't really enjoy my day-to-day life, and I'm not excited by anything -  
which is true, but it's not the whole truth, and we don't need to talk about  
that right now!

I can only be responsible for my handling of this situation!

I don't want to write about you because I don't want you to worry!

I can only be responsible for my handling of this situation!

I don't want to write about you because I don't want you to worry!

I didn't like hearing about my mom being sexually assaulted, but now I realize that this has happened to a lot of women in my life.  
Nobody likes hearing about it.

My grandparents were stingy with their money.  
They went to church, we went hungry.

They are good people - according to other people.

As a Kid:

- Everyone was drunk, but someone was usually reading.
- Watching red Jeep Grand Cherokee lurch forward when it should have reversed, knocking infant sister over. Some screams, everyone was fine.
- Watching white econoline cargo van run a stop sign, knocking my too-young brother off his bike. Many screams, he was not fine for a very long time.
- My pregnant mother in a light blue Geo Metro, t-boned by bigger car.
- My mom 'dying' while getting her tubes tied, after the birth of my sister.

It's kind-of like how everyone enjoys endless re-runs of Seinfeld, Frasier, the Simpsons, whatever.

The house kinda smells like pee, between the cat's litter box and the days that i'm at work for 14 hours and the dog pees on her mat by the back door - or the two adults that never seem to flush the toilet.

The house isn't very nice but I love it regardless. I know there are much nicer places, but this one has been the most mine that i've had in my thirty-plus years of life. The weird-stained faux-wood is pretty shitty and dark and gross and paint-spotted from years of spraypainting indoors, but why would I care about that? Really. One day dirty floors will come in style, like exposed brick - and i'll be ahead of the curve.

There are enough books to read and more come through the mail slot every day. There is always music or the news at a fitting ambient level. This makes a home.

The house is full of books I intend to read eventually, as though time works like that. "Eventually" meaning "not important enough to read now."

More "eventual" reads get bought, put on a shelf, forgotten about.

Books clog the space between the cabinet and the ceiling in the kitchen. Every surface has a stack, and eventually that stack becomes a table. Every bag has a book. Every book has another book that needs to be read.

Why did I think I need to read the Noel Coward diaries? 712 pages? Why did I end up with this book? When will I ever need to read it?

Eventually. I'll sit down and read it then.

I can't decide what I want to listen to, and I waste a lot of time trying to figure it out.

I'm nervous to call the record store and ask if they have that thing I want - I don't want to have to spell it out. I don't want to hear confusion on the other line.

I started leaving my socks on while having sex - innocuous enough, just cozy - cozy is key. I decided to sleep in my socks too. An extra step I could bypass while getting ready in the morning - which is how I started wearing the same socks two days in a row.

Something happened, and now I wake up in jeans and a sweater. No relation to the drunk-spins-asleep-on-the-couch-waking-up-fully-dressed-but-unsure-of-how-you-got-there, this was a problem that stemmed from having no problems.

"I just wanna be dressed when I wake up."

She pairs off the socks while the dog destroys the laundry hamper.

I don't even put appointments in my calendar anymore. I just remember what I want to do and forget the other things.

Now I find myself waiting, because something is supposed to happen. waiting in a lounge, drinking an 11\$ beer while soft rock plays from above.

Of course, I have forgotten my headphones. Of course. I'm just waiting.

I want to go away for a while.

Montreal, where it's colder and familiar and I don't need a passport.  
getting there isn't difficult, but leaving can be - the dog, the cat, the work,  
the house, the bills. those are here, and require me to tend to them.

And I cannot smoke on a plane or on a bus.  
Another example of the curse of luxury.

No matter where you are, you still need to buy cigarettes in the morning.  
Language barrier or not, you can somehow fumble those words out.

I'd love to see you at the first snowfall of the season - like last year, like the  
year before.

You, in front of a neon sign stating 'romance.'

Me, my stupid life which will be forever incomplete as I am working on  
'something new.'

I stray from my first thought.

I tell you that the house is haunted, but the ghost isn't a mean one. still,  
there is a ghost, and it occasionally scares the shit out of me.

I snorted pixie stix off a five-star binder.  
I snorted Advil off of a bar top during brunch service.

Page 163 from 'a million little pieces.'

An essay on unreal nostalgia and memory

I see a deep fryer, and I think of things being deep fried

It doesn't matter the brand, color, whatever - it makes me think of  
something being fried - donut holes. I don't have any idea what year, if  
there is a year. I don't know if this actually happened. It was probably  
grocery store donuts on the counter the whole time.

A change in rendering:

You notice something once, and then begin noticing it everywhere.

Confirmation bias.

The pattern in your attention. has changed and now you render your reality differently. Noticing grass, trees, ripples in the pond - because you're forced to

Am I genetically determined to commit suicide?

I like these characteristics in other people:

manic depressive, quiet-loud-quiet, self-depreciating, all will to work / no will to live, talented with no desire, restless and fucking tired.

Why should I regress into an idle life with dirt and dust?

When I talk about men with machine guns in the back of a pickup truck, I can't help but use words such as 'terrorist' and 'extremist.' that's how it was explained to me, so that's how I explain it to other people.

Me, being afraid of men with guns.

Me, taking what i'm seeing at face value.

It's probably because i'm old now. At least i'm old in the face. even when I shave completely, I look old. I see it in photographs of my hands, too. i'm now old and scared.

I look at my work with distrust, the same way I can not believe my face is mine. My face betrays me; my writing exposes me. This shared exposure offers me no solace. No peace.

Obsessed by photographing breasts - not a sexual thing, but for what it represented.

Intimacy without redaction.

Now is the time to work - well, to work on something.

I suppose it's easier to lie about what it is you're doing.

Just exaggerations. That 'client' might not know you're working for them yet.

My work is the research into the work i'll produce eventually.

Working backwards.

every argument i've ever had with a girlfriend is me screaming "you don't understand me" and them shouting back "you're exactly who I think you are."

My sexual fantasy is having the love of my life hand an envelope of cash and a fake passport.

I drag myself through life like a slug - some things stick to me, but not on purpose.

What am I interested in?

Explaining why I think the way that I do.

I was very committed to getting fit after I stopped doing drugs.

I think the black and red St. Louis Cardinals hat was my favorite of my teens.

Mixologist, no. Bartender. Happier, but not out for drinks.

Prefer the mud to the fish.

Now, I have cannot drink - makes me sleepy. I think, well, it's winter. I should make soup instead of drinking. I have to go out to get soup making ingredients. I have to leave the house at least once in order to stay in the house for a while. I want to go to work and go home and shut up for four months.

Or however long it takes!

I hate soup, this plan is awful.

non fiction

My wife and I are very different. Maybe that is why we get along.

Alexa and I picked up on our first date. I fell asleep before we had sex.

Now I am eating a spinach salad with my hands.

Now I want to get home and take my vitamins and have a smoothie.

There are no solutions because there are no problems.

The way we fit together over time.

I read somewhere that people - lovers, like us - just shape into each other.  
You know? Maybe I saw that on TV.

Mild chest pains - which side is my heart on, anyways?

I don't want to be friends with these 'culture vulture' types.

We say things like, "well, it could be worse."

'Oxi,' meaning 'no' in Greek.

I obsessively filmed and photographed you for months, because I kept expecting you to disappear.

I always see people before they see me.

while talking of performance, I am reminded that it's all performance.  
I know that it's work, and that I am here to do a job - and get paid.

life, post-dust bowl, has shown us that work comes and goes and that we need to do it NOW.

life, post-depression, has shown us that there's never enough money for the work we do.

life has shown us that we have to work until the end.

I don't bring new smiles with me when I travel. I keep the same tight-lipped expression that I learned from the comfort of my own home.

If you see someone with a massive Dell laptop at the coffee shop, assume they're going through a rough patch.

That's classist!

That's a fact!

I saw a photo of you and you looked so good! I think you were still in your junky phase but you looked very skinny and happy!

My teeth just don't get clean. All the whitestrips and heavy chemical toothpaste and charcoal treatments and lasers do nothing, yeah. Too much coffee, tea, smoking - no, i've never had braces. Yes, i've still been grinding my teeth but they haven't been hurting at night. No penny-flavored blood, not lately.

I don't use the clinical strength deodorant anymore, either. My hormones regulated themselves. Probably because of my diet. I don't eat burgers anymore.

My knees hurt even in my dreams. I dreamt my left knee felt like it would 'ostrich' out, like it does some times in real life. The pain that was real in my dreams woke up me up to a real thunderstorm, so bright I assume we were in the cloud.

The dog cried at the door, wanting to go outside. After a quick moment in the rain, she decided that it'd be better to pee on the kitchen floor instead. I take two Advil and lay back down.

I could think of one person whose identity I could steal, if I really needed to. We look probably 'close enough.' ID photos never really look accurate, anyways. Harsh lighting. Maybe I had a few pimples on photo day - well, that was then. This is me now. Why would you argue with me, the person with the ID that looks close enough like the person he claims to be?

My French is bad, so i'm silent. Your French is good, so I pull on your coat like a child, indicating I need another glass of wine.

The bartender exchanges English with a man five seats down, but turns to us in French. She rolls her eyes at me and returns with the bottle of Clairette.

I speak quietly because my voice exposes me as a tourist. I speak so softly, I need to repeat myself - which makes it clear that I cannot speak the language properly.

I used to excuse myself by saying 'I'm a journalist, not a tourist,' but that wasn't true - I'm simply a self-aware and self-loathing man on vacation.

I read every French author that English speakers read. I read them so I could talk about them. I have more French tattoos than in my native English. I'm not sure who I'm trying to impress.

I'm a fraud, and I hate being exposed as such.

It's easy enough to fake when you're not in a French city. You can dismiss these things. Wave them off with a 'I don't want to talk about it.'

I just wanted to be part of a group I had no business with.  
I'm a bad translation.

My brain talks to my hands and feet, but they do not co-operate. My left side does what it wants, but it usually doesn't listen. It lags behind. Noticeably too slow.

I am the result of the things I've read. Things I've done - not really. My mistakes read glossy on paper.

Everyone has a start-up company.

Everything is about to blow up.

Everyone is rich and wants to buy a painting.

Everyone is donating \$5 to your Kickstarter campaign.

Everyone stopped using plastic straws.

Everyone is combating climate change.

Everyone brought their own coffee mug to the coffee shop.

Everyone wants the bad guys to get put away - for good.

Everyone knows the rules.

Everyone dreams of a better life.

Everyone is looking for a better apartment on Craigslist.

Everyone wants the new iPhone, but will wait until Black Friday sales are announced.

Everyone avoids GMOs.

Everyone can agree it's important to support local businesses.

Everyone has made the switch to oat milk.

Everyone feels welcome in this multicultural community.

Everyone can do a little bit more.

Everyone had an apple for lunch and drank eight glasses of water at work.

Everyone showers using lukewarm water.

My anxiety is bad; I need to take my scarf off. I need to stop smoking. I need to not talk about this with anybody. My throat hurts. I don't want you to worry. I think i'm tired.

Remember why I tried to touch you on the train? I wanted to check your heartbeat is all. I can't stop yawning.

Look through old notebooks. I threw out a bunch of them, but there are still a few. I would edit them and toss out the originals. I didn't want someone to stumble upon my frantic, desperate, tears-in-my-eyes-for-no-reason notes to myself.

Ideally, I could write about the internet - even though I could say my internet usage is much more 'streamlined' than it was 15 years ago. If I know what i'm looking for, I know where to find it.

The discovery of Library Genesis was the missing resource for many years - a comprehensive search to download more esoteric and rare books.

"Start reading on my phone" was part of the agreement I had made with myself in order to rationalize buying a new phone. I didn't really need one, but I certainly wanted it.

Alexa says the only reason why I don't have 'junkybrain' is because I kept reading.

I bought condoms just to jack off into. For practice.

The stuff in the trash is trash!

Well, that depends on what you mean by drugs, doesn't it?

It's offensive to tell someone to smile.

What's that stain on your paper - is that Pepsi?

You shouldn't be humiliated.

Burning incense that smells like feet in order to cover the actual smell of feet.

I don't want blurbs that suck my dick on the back of my book!

My back hurts from sitting still. My eyes hurt from reading. I have no plan for when I get home.

I never learned to shave because nobody taught me. Even after years of googling 'practical tips,' i'd say I have the concept down but can't seem to nail the execution. I only grew hair on my throat until I was 28, anyways. I had an electric razor that sucked because it was meant for giving people skin fades, not cleaning up squirrely neck beards. I could go a month without shaving because it never looked 'that bad,' until it suddenly looked

'very bad' overnight.

I'd slice up my adam's apple and douse my wounds with witch hazel and that was my skincare routine.

I need a new hiding place, where I can read and write and be quiet and unbothered for as long as I need to. Ideally they also have food and coffee, but I am flexible with this part. Close to the door, in case I want to smoke.

I have ruined my last two hiding places by being there too often, becoming overfamiliar. I'm here to do whatever I need to do, and not think about anything else. I do not want to smile at anyone. I do not want to talk about my day yet.

I also need this hiding place to be close to "whatever it is I will be doing later," for ease of transition from work-to-work.

I want this place to be unknown to others. A private Macbook zen garden.

I'm complaining about needing to work, but i'm just scribbling noses and staring into my phone. I complain about not having enough time, but I willingly waste most of it.

Maybe the work will never get done.  
Maybe this is the work?

I listen to that one podcast where everyone is stoned and I laugh even though I am sober and it's 3pm and i'm walking to staples to buy transparencies.

I've become the kind-of person that puts protein powder in his coffee but still laughs when a man calls another man gay. Not sexually gay, the other one.

"Francis, can you hand me my glasses."

"Dimitri."

"Dimitri, yeah."

It happens enough to where i'm just - I just don't say much.

I couldn't imagine what would happen if I had a slip-up like this. It'd be

apocalyptic.

I listen to my records as slow as I can - the slowest settings - slow, droning, churning tones. Wet. Sloppy. Like it's raining, and i'm half-asleep.

I have 30 open tabs on chrome relating to Project Artichoke and MK Ultra. I've had them open for a week or so, reading pretty much none of them. I'm not sure what to do with them now.

Probably nothing, I don't know. I don't remember what I was thinking.

I hate the thought of travelling, but here we go again.

It's almost unavoidable, should you be truly cosmopolitan. You have to go away to come back to say "oh, I was out of town."

I can get a Greek flag keychain, a "Jamaican Me Crazy" t-shirt, a Swiss snowglobe - I can just buy these on Amazon, and you wouldn't be able to tell me otherwise.

Instead, I overpack my bags with ambition: two cameras with two lenses each, a freezer bag of film, notebook, three novels - and, as always, no clothes.

I can, and will, buy my clothes when I arrive. It's a small pleasure.

I hate doing "adult things." Paying bills. It's exhausting. It's a dreadful drag that reminds me how bad I am at being grown up. I pay my rent and I feel better. I do my laundry and I feel relieved. I still don't want to do them again.

I go to the kitchen where I cut a piece of pecan pie with an 80\$ cheese knife and eat it with my hands. I add a few more books to my amazon cart, but two of them aren't available with prime next-day delivery so I start to second-guess this whole project.

Something fast and unspectacular.

I don't consider morals and ethics when it comes to my reporting.

I didn't want to throw anything away

I'm interested in the feeling of having one headphone in, listening to both the ambient sounds of the day and someone's soundcloud at the same time.

Having extensive savings has never been an option for me. I've never had that luxury. At one point I had maybe 3000\$ after paying rent. I think that has been my financial high point.

That's normal, right? It must be normal.

He's dressed in expensive, dirty clothes.

Like a hustler?

You've watched too many movies.

Terrifying things:

Patterns, or the breaking of patterns.

Cars that slow down in pace with me.

Locking eyes with a cop.

The unfamiliar man that rushes into the bar.

Counting the money pile.

Entering an unfamiliar cafe with the intention to read.

Every woman i've ever dated has changed their name.

I'm serious!

Two drinks. A drink per hand, so I don't have to touch anybody.

Sorry, hands full!

I have coffee and puff on my electronic cigarette in the bathroom. I pull hard, urgently - making me dizzy, as it usually does.

A woman drinking a tequila soda says 'fo shizzle.'

Handling dirty dishes - you know I hate it.

It's drafty behind the bar, but I don't want to put a sweater on.

Smile! Smile in a photograph every once in a while!

But I look so phony!

Enter piano music, followed by fifteen frames of Henry Moore sculptures.

I turn and photograph you between the pillars - your big winter jacket hides you. It's a photo of your clothes, and I didn't realize until I looked at the negative.

Always forgetting birthdays - now it's so bad, I don't even attempt to reach to people. Even if i'm alerted beforehand!

My tics:

Sucking my teeth, biting my bottom lip.

Scratching my right eye.

Squeezing the bridge of my nose.

Running my fingers through my hair.

Re-adjusting my hat.

Wiping my mouth.

Furrowing my brow.

You never smile, you're always frowning!

That's just the way my face sits!

I can't even frown as deep as you, but that might be the botox.

After receiving my first paycheck at my first job, I realized I needed a way to continue getting to work if this was going to continue. I don't think i'd had such a substantial paycheck before. Actually, i'm positive. I was rich. I was working class rich, and I took to craigslist to celebrate my newfound wealth. I needed a bike, and I wanted a BMX. BMXs were uncool, but I never had one when I was a young man - well, that's not true. I had a small weird Wal-Mart bike, but let's not count that. I wanted a Haro. I wanted a real bike. With pegs!

As BMXs are the most impractical bike for commuting, this dream died pretty quickly. I do have one solid memory with this bike, where i'm bombing down Ossington blackout drunk on the pegs and scream laughing. I am always shocked when I think of the times I didn't die.

I gave that bike away to my brother, and I think it got stolen a few weeks after that.

I became a fixie guy because it was cool in cool cities. It wasn't yet 'cool' here. I had bought a real piece of shit converted road bike that would lose chain tension immediately because it had bent dropouts, but it was 400\$ - which was cheap. 400\$, and I sold the bike a few years later for another 400\$.

I wanted to be a 'bike guy' that hung out at the bike shop, so I bought an expensive bike. I took all the nice parts off the expensive bike and put BMX pedals on it, ensuring 'nice bike' looked 'fucking stupid' which meant 'I knew what I was doing.' I became very good at riding this bike because I never wanted to get off. I would zoom around on this no-brakes death machine a million miles an hour (according to Strava, the cycling app of choice on my iPhone 4)- it made me feel closer to death, which made me horny.

The PDF jockeys for idle enjoyment with Twitter and Instagram.  
I don't feel like it's reading a book. It's more like reading the news - at least, like reading the Times.

Work is, and must be, work - otherwise, what the fuck?  
What's the point?

I love agonizing over deadlines as it means I have to do work - to get paid.  
To do the work.

I work hard for a lazy person.  
My work is sitting on a computer and thinking.  
My work is sitting on the couch.

In an organizational setting, saying "Yes" in theory encourages people to listen and be receptive to the ideas of others. Rather than immediately judging the idea, as judgment has its place later on in the development process, one should initially accept the idea, which enables the discussion to expand on the idea without limitations.

My standard unconscious facial expression is one of contempt.  
That's just my face, I say. I didn't ask for this one.

Confirmation bias.

I'm describing myself as an artist. I wear nice new Nikes and tweet about my money woes. I wish I did more work but I also want the world to end. I don't send emails because I don't want to receive emails that I don't want to respond to.

Everything is predictable, so it's bad.  
No, it's fact.

There's wisdom in repetition.

I derail a sex scene in my new novel but talking about Oscar Wilde in jail.

Predictable!

I'm back on a train, charging my nicotine pen with my only USB port. I keep going to the washroom to vape into my shirt, leaving behind a flat mango smell. I look like a man with a bladder infection, I bet.

I have to reset the workspace for 2020. I don't know what I mean. I need to change something. Move things around, again and again. I need to start new. I need to do things better.

By my count, i've given up everything I own:  
-once at 17, moving out and moving countries.  
-again at 19, back to the city.  
-at 23, giving up my studio in search of 'something more stable.'  
-at 26, thinking New York was a good idea.  
-at 28, when drugs won the war on drugs.

Now, at 31 - I do not want to buy cutlery again.

Do you have an optimum card?  
Do you have a student or teacher card?  
Are you a rewards member?  
Would you like to donate 2\$ to sick kid's hospital?  
Would you like to apply for a wal-mart credit card?

Do you wanna watch jeopardy?

I don't like going to the doctor. My medicine, inherited through family tradition, is to 'go ahead and sleep it off.' It usually solves the problem in a day or two. Maybe three if it's viral.

I said I would go to the doctor if the numbness in my left side continued. I had no intention of doing so. Not for a second. I would rather just live with an ailment than take steps to fix it.

I also assumed I would eventually just 'die.' Randomly, all at once. Not drawn out with hospital visits and medicine. Just be dead and get it over with.

This was my plan.

Maybe I had the flu. Maybe it's nicotine withdrawal. WebMD says it's nicotine withdrawal. Knowing that doesn't make me feel any better.

I feel like not smoking should make me feel better. Instead, I feel like i'm having a stroke.

And i'm furious all the time.

I could walk endlessly because everything was new. Everything that could become common was constantly renewing itself - a new tag, a new argument, an endless rotation of now-new nothing-to-see-here's.

I can always see the end when I stand still.

The return to where you started is part of the agreement of going for a walk.

I spend most of my time not writing. I walk around to get ideas, and I come home with them - I bring them home and leave them there. I go back out, and come home with more. I'm a hoarder.

Walking allows me to support my obsessions.

It's mine because I took it.

A photograph of a person is perhaps more understandable and appealing.

I've been distracted. I have two hours left to read. That's it. That doesn't feel like enough time to get started.

I calculate the past two weeks as being at least 125 hours at job A alone.

I can't listen to podcasts while I read, it's too overstimulating.

Now i'm talking with Poet from Brussels about HTML.

I sit in this cafe for hours and spend 5\$ in coffee and 2\$ in tips.

Everything seems ordinary, lately.

Someone plugs in an external hard drive just to look at Facebook.

My shirt is a touch too small.

I do some math, and if i'm being generous, i'd say I make 52\$k a year - if i'm being generous.

I spend almost all of that continuing to go to work, so it's a vicious cycle.

Now, all I can think about is all the work i'd like to do once January 1st hits, and I can start a new cycle.

I pull away from my reading to complain about institutional education in North America.

Now I have an hour.

I speak about Toronto like i'm a travel agent. It's great to work here, there are many hidden beauties, all of those awful lines.

Who told me I could get high smoking grapevines?

A man coughs and it sounds like a dog barking.

I've been getting sweaty and dizzy when I skip meals, but i'm also trying to lose weight.

Either i'm skinny and frail or fat and stable?

Not fat, but what I mean is -  
I'm hungry.

We sprayed my legs down with Windex after hiking through the woods.  
What looked like dirt was actually berry bugs burrowing into my ankle skin.

I cannot list one survival skill that is useless outside of the city.

In the end times, at the doorstep of the apocalypse...  
i'll pile up my books to block my door?

I don't feel poetic while i'm shuffling dirty plates off a table.  
Perhaps that's the point.

Every anecdote is rehearsed and delivered as prescribed.

A sauna visit, maybe. Something to clean me.  
A float in a sensory deprivation tank.

I can relive my past failures in my mind - no need to make new ones.

I prefer to stare catatonically into Instagram while telling people on the timeline how hard i'm working.

I hear an ambulance or fire truck and I feel ill.  
I realize it's going the other way, away from anything that concerns me, so  
I order a chicken sandwich.

A very strong desire to acknowledge my own ugly work.

Everyday anxiety:

- being introduced to someone and instantly forgetting their name
- not having enough \$ on me for whatever I have to do
- public washrooms

Nowhere to find peace.  
I hope I don't bump into anyone I don't like

Spiritual interests imposter syndrome.

What do I need to read next?  
Should I organize my reading to my needs?

Do people still send emails anymore?  
Maybe I should return emails again.

When I think of myself, I usually am thinking of something else.  
I don't think there's much of me beyond my work.

Can I be a great writer if i'm so bothered by other people?  
Other people have to read me!

I stopped drinking for two days and didn't do any work.  
I've been off work for five days and haven't done any writing.  
I crave a beer and I need to write, but I won't do either.

I take b12 and citrulline and some sex-drive-enhancer with my juice.  
It gives me a headache, but I might be making that up.

Size 9 Jordan 312 Legacy 'Just Don' white/black/volt/blue/wolf grey on  
smudged tile at the police station.

I think, hey - maybe i'll have another good year, like the old days. Just have  
to work hard! And smart! Maybe i'll do better this time around!

This version of me.

I stare and I eavesdrop until it becomes mine.

Knee doctor says I have to back doctor, maybe see a sleep doctor.  
Definitely go see a stress doctor. Knee doctor charges me \$400 for this  
evaluation.

Watching the condo dwellers flood out at 8:30 and in at 5:30.

The plagiarism of self.

For our purposes, we will use plagiarism as a synonym for repetition.

Completely un-American.

I am looking for a way to pay my bills: a short novel where I go to work.  
Why am I afraid to ask for the money i'm owed? I don't want to bother anyone.

We brought the patio furniture indoors for the winter.  
We needed a place to eat brie.

The library has taken over the living room, which was previously also the library.

The renovations you wanted, after all.

I check my email one more time and get back to reading.

I watch 1:21 of a recently filmed POV sextape.

I have very important work to do.

I turn on the sound recording app before calling you back.

If I wanted to use certain sounds, if I felt so inclined.

I leave the house to go for coffee.

He chose to end his emails with the phrase, "everything terribly."

"Thanks!" No.

"Everything terribly."

I think of Chris Marker,  
I even think of old Chris Marker the father I never had,  
I think of Christ Marker.

Another PDF downloaded to the cell phone. Another thing.

Every time the cafe door opens, I get distracted by a cold gust of wind.

Some restaurant burnt down, negligence or something. Drinking at work.  
15-10 unemployed people to start the holiday season.

Phone call:

"I don't care. I just don't want there to be food on the bar top. We can deal with the details later, just make sure my space is left alone. Pasta at the big table. Whitefish on the low-tops. Leave the bar alone. I need to be free to make my money."

I finally got around to blocking that woman, the one who copied my last project to sell to Carhartt.

Now, we speak in contrarian terms - doublespeak?  
Everyone hates Quentin Tarantino?

The same people who had a poster of Marilyn Monroe in their dorm.  
The same people who went to the same liberal arts college.

I've fallen on hard times, but i'm making the best of it.

I'm using this as a networking opportunity.

Blocking everyone.  
Where competition goes to die.

I don't want to leave here as an anagram or metaphor!

Zip me a .docx of dirty talk and ascii nudes!

My sense of resolve:

I wake up and have a cigarette, walk the dog, buy a coffee, stare at my phone.

I might water the plants if I feel guilty enough.

We sit at the table and the dog begs for bread.

My Amazon.ca cart has another anti-capitalist book in it.

I google 'intermittent fasting' and 'red light therapy lamps.'

I buy a pair of foam Nike trainers and a new pair of shorts before going to the gym.

How can I con the publishing world into accepting me as one of their own?

## I'VE SAID A MILLION TIMES I WILL NOT START OVER

I let the dog on the patio so she can pee, which I clean up with paper towel before it drips over the edge. The downstairs neighbor screams when it does. I don't know him, but I hate him. I also understand, as I wouldn't want to be showered with piss at any hour.

I come back into the house where Townes Van Zandt is playing over the Bluetooth speaker. I have a headache, so I take another Advil. I can feel the headache slowly making way for a migraine as my eyes are hurting enough to make me dizzy as I type on my MacBook Pro.

The dog sits on the couch, chewing her favorite blue faux-bone.

I change the music and have a cigarette. I sit back in my chair and look around the room. Everything in this house is mine. I've worked for every single book, every record, every bottle of cleaner, every pen, every bowl, every fork, every lamp, every shelf, every package of post-its, every shoe, every hat, every plant, every synthesizer, every mirror, every painting, every camera, every bag of chips, every stuffed Simpson's character, every face cleanser, every surge protector, every candle, every tape recorder, every roll of gaffer tape, every stool, every desk, every garbage bin, every Swiffer wetjet, every cat litter pan, every towel, every stainless steel cooking pan, every can of seltzer in the fridge.

I walk into the kitchen and eat the leftover Szechuan noodles from last night's take-out. I offer the dog a very small shrimp, which she graciously accepts.

I am waiting for a book I ordered on Amazon to arrive.

I should get back to work.

I go back into the kitchen and boil some water. I will top up this morning's coffee with fresh instant. I take another Advil. I look around the kitchen, which is covered in artifacts from a completely lived life. I look at the Nine Inch Nails VHS boxset, the cook books i've only glanced at, the cocktail books i've obsessed over, a broken watch mounted to the wall with the

statement 'time destroys everything' taped over the face, the working clock with the statement 'time destroys everything' taped in the center, a series of press passes dangling from a single nail, a Spudz McKenzie scarf, photographs from people who don't take photographs anymore, four unsold paintings, a custom-made water dish for the Tennessee Cat using the Hennessey font, three embroidered Tennessee patches, a series of stolen plaques with the statement 'please ask us for help if you're in need,' more vitamins and supplements than I could ever take, the blender from my early health-goth phase, an empty Rush popper container, a 'Big Dick Man' cd single, this year's birthday candle, seemingly endless unopened alcohol bottles.

The dog heads back to the couch, where she instantly falls asleep.

I sit on the computer chair I bought from a woman moving out of apartment 2012 in 2017.

I message my girlfriend and tell her I hope her microneedling facial treatment goes well. I tell her she's beautiful. I smoke another cigarette.

I consider going to the gym but decide i'm too depressed.

I write for about four hours and intermittently break to pet the dog. I walk over and wake her up with kisses on her snout. I pet her back and tell her to go back to sleep. I stare at her from across the room. She is the most beautiful dog i've ever seen. She snuggles into the blanket and exhales from her nose.

I have taken six breaks to pick at the three boxes of Chinese food leftovers.

I check my drawers and my pockets for a pack of cigarettes that I shouldn't have. I'm not supposed to smoke anymore. I find half a pack in my North Face jacket.

I yawn, noticing my back hurts from sitting down all day. I consider masturbating but decide against it. I make another coffee. I wonder if anything good will ever happen to me. I get back to work.

I film the dog having a nightmare. She wakes up when I replay the video and she hears her own yelps. I watch Jon Rafman's video for Oneohtrix Point Never's 'Still Life.' It takes me too long to find a transcription for the

overdubbed speech.

'For a moment it all interlocks, but then a new pattern of order-disorder emerges in front of you. Always the one before the last.'

I download a mp3 rip from the Vimeo page since I can't find it on Soulseek.

I have spent an hour thinking about Oneohtrix Point Never.

I turn the Toronto Raptors game on and mute the sound so I can continue listening to the song I mentioned above.

I WANT TO HAVE SEX.

I

ONE

TWO

HALF

SIX.

Half-coughing phlegm and holding it in my mouth, hoping a moment comes where I can spit it out without causing a scene. That moment doesn't arrive, so I just swallow it without breaking eye contact. Better out of my lungs and into my stomach, I suppose. It's not the worst thing in there right now.

Another writer goes to the Dovercourt YMCA to run. He runs on the treadmill, goes outside for a smoke, and comes back in to run for another half hour. That's what I do. That's my fitness cycle.

Goddamn it, he crosses his legs like me, too. Tight and awkward.

I can't go back, now. I'm in direction competition with this man. I'm definitely in better shape than him. I must be. I'm probably ten years younger, but he's ten years more famous than me. We've both had very public detoxes. We can be nothing but enemies.

I went to the 24 hour Planet Fitness in the mall. I'd go after work, so 3-4am. Ideally, more than a bit drunk. It'd help with the pain in my knees - my ACL, I think. I'd run for minutes and I'd cab home. I did this for a few weeks without having the 'breakthrough' moment leading me into a better life. I was always a drunk idiot listening to screamo running slowly on a treadmill.

I've only seen dolphins twice. The first time, I can't remember. The second time, I was very seasick and couldn't lift my head. I saw them swim beside the boat and I thought, 'wow.' I would be hit with another fit of nausea and have to lay down on the floor of the craft with another victim - a young kid, crying, devastated that she was too sick to see the sea animals. I laugh about it now but it was certainly a waste of money.

I make a list of the things I can do for work:

- computer something
- local newspaper nonsense
- librarian?
- landscaper
- uh
- i could still be a bartender
- how do i weasel another art job?
- i think that i could really do anything, but i don't really want to
- i want to work on my computer

I could split my entire adult life into three parts:

18- to 26: overachieving social climbing fucking fraud

26- to 30: drugs and doom

30- onward: better, but still not great

I should sell all my clothes on Etsy.

Don't give into the sadness, Artax.

I truly want to quit drinking and smoking - both completely, or maybe just mostly.

When I was a teenage vegetarian, I would steal honey-garlic glazed popcorn chicken from the fridge. I would rush the entire container to my bedroom and binge eat as many as I could, which was usually all of them. It would always wind up in an argument, someone yelling and someone yelling back. I would shrug and say 'yeah, this is why I don't eat meat.'

Telling the time is a symptom of depression. You are extremely aware of the time, all of the time.

I consider it a feeling of dampness - listening to music on your headphones while other music plays in the background of the cafe.

I check my voicemail, just in case.

I remember being here but I can't recall why. I don't remember anyone in this room, I don't remember why I remember being here.

I go to the exercise class and sit in the darkest corner in the back, avoiding the cheers and jubilation before and after - I am here to do this task alone and I will do it efficiently.

Eventually, the excitement wears off and i'm back to sitting on my computer.

"Enjoy it while it lasts," she says. I gaze into the future without a crystal ball.

There's a photograph of me wearing a pink wig at work, laughing, big smiles. Definitely drunk, probably high, but undeniably happy. Nothing out of the ordinary was happening.

I am always thinking about whatever it is I have to do at this exact moment.

I spent my youth on foot or in cabs. I never considered getting a license.

I don't like the cold, I don't like the snow, but the rain doesn't bother me - until, eventually, it does.

I thought my class was at five, but it's actually at six. I'll see you at seven.

No surprises, no chances, not prepared.

One house special: beet, carror, kale, ginger, lemon.  
One tofu banh-mi, no mayo.

I'm going 'joker mode' on Twitter.

I'm watching the democratic debate while reading "Against Expression" on my phone while writing this down. There is one table in the bar and they argue about the semantic meaning of the phrase 'working class.'

I run my tongue across the back of my teeth, poking the spot where a cyanide capsule would be if I were a spy.

A rendezvous.

Should we meet, i'd rupture the poison immediately.

"I'm kidding." - my Infinite Jest

Yeah, they're saying it's going to be a quarantine. You should be grateful to have a family to go home to. I'm going to stay home regardless. I'm doing my part to help the general public by leaving society in the comfort of my own home.

In this fantasy, my internet usage is unlimited.

The man on TV says "I'm mad as hell and i'm not going to take it anymore."

I try to earnestly explain that i'm losing my mind.

I grimace where other's might grin.

I want to be a truck-driving man.

I want to look 25% more blue-collar than I am. Call me a poser if you'd like.

I destroy what i've done and I call it progress.

I visualize myself in an environment of blankness.

It's hailing frogs or stones or crickets or locusts or blood or someone is yelling at me to kill my first born.

Nobody demands an explanation.

I cancel my fitness class. I cut white flour out of my diet. Nobody asks about either.

Oh, to be the artist in vogue - to be a success for doing nothing but being rich and pretty.

Is AI the 'experimental influencer' I was talking about?

God, I hate all these tourists. I blame that sandwich place! The one with the instagram! God! They're annexing all the seats in this cafe while they wait for their shitty \$15 parmesan!

I hate responding to emails, I hate calling for reservations, I hate craving cigarettes.

I can't read because I can't focus, I watch porn because i'm bored, I yawn because i'm tired, I can't sleep because you snore.

Something happened in a very strange rhythm. His other self exchanged places with him. Now, he is the perfect wedding guest.

I ambitiously over-order so i'll have leftovers for lunch tomorrow.

A man unpacks his laptop, an ergonomic mouse, headphones, a charging dock for his iPhone, and a small moleskin notebook. He sits on Facebook for twenty minutes and leaves.

I don't object to sleeping on the couch. There is a problem with my blood again.

I have a hard time breathing because I broke my nose.

A rich couple loves young Barolo.

A thing of beauty is a joy forever. A loving destructive force.

I don't want to use this particular notebook anymore.

Record collecting is a new fixation - one i'm glad to have come across only in later life. I'd returned to DJing after a five year hiatus. Previously, my DJ sets were playing reworked songs off Ableton through a borrowed SP404 sampler. It was usually not well received.

"Ahead of its time," I called it.

I had bought a Serato controller from a Bay Street banker that apparently never used it, and I thought - well, this is fun. I understand this. I had also thought - I want more.

I've always preferred to be consumed by my obsessions. I read everything I could and watched endless YouTube videos and felt like it was time to legitimize my practice.

I had one cheap, bland, trash Audio-Technica turntable and a handful of records. I never really used it, but now I held the entire setup with contempt. It looked causal and lazy, because it was. I put the turntable on craigslist immediately, which I traded for a Squire strat - which I never play.

I tried all the turntable setups at the A/V store a few blocks east. I realized I like bigger, clunkier turntables - I was already anticipating being rough with whatever I bought. I also was shocked by how expensive everything was. I was pricing myself out of my range. I had to go back to Craigslist. I found a set of barely used decks, still with original box, for 1\$k. An hour later, I was waiting in a Liberty Village condo lobby while a blonde real-estate agent wheeled the set through glass double-doors.

(I am thankful for those rich, awful, impulsive buyers of things that they don't have any interest in using. I am thankful they get rid of them.)

I set them up and stared them down, very content with my choice - but i wasn't satisfied with mixing Oneohtrix Point Never into Leonard Cohen. I needed more records, ASAP.

Alexa and I made an agreement - we would stop into every record store we passed, no exceptions. We would pick up anything we found immediately interesting. No second thoughts.

It was an expensive few weeks.

The novelty wore off quickly for Alexa, while I found myself strangled by new obsession. I would walk to the six closest record stores twice a week - checking the same crates as if something changed from Tuesday to Friday. I would come up with the scarce weird blog-house I craved very rarely. More often than not, I would grab a traditional house cut and head to the next spot.

If I had found one thing I wanted, I would tear the shop apart, assuming whomever recently sold it must have gotten rid of other gems that only I would want. I can recall one extreme situation of finding two Ed Banger singles and spending an hour combing through the stacks after, extracting nine or ten more.

I've always loved to hunt.

After a few weeks with no real luck, I started hoarding records with the intent to sample them 'eventually.' Use them 'somehow.'

When I say 'hoarding,' I mean raiding the trash outside of the Salvation Army, coming home with a courier bag filled with church hymns and Brahms. Buying every dollar bin disco single. 200-100 records a week, for several weeks.

I half-assed digitizing some samples without organizing them. The project was immediately too daunting.

I look at the wall of records and realize it needs to be organized. That's the problem. It's improperly organized. It will bother me until I do it - but I cannot do it now. Currently, it's sorted by genre and 'likelihood of usefulness.' It's hard to explain what I mean, beyond 'if I need it, I can see it.' The Richard Simmons workout LP and the soundtrack to the King of Comedy are either overhead or at my knees.

I had thought about trading some records in, but the hoarder urge hits me - 'what if I need it in the future?'

The wall continues to grow, and I continue to do nothing.

For the first twenty years of my life, I was a very devoted patron of the library. Growing up poor (or poorer-than-most), I was taught that books are valuable friends that must come-and-go. You can always revisit them, should the urge persist. We had Danielle Steele and Jackie Collins in the house - books found at the checkout of the supermarket. I eagerly read them as a pre-teen, adding fire to an already sexually confused fire. I read Harry Potter PDFs downloaded from Limewire. By 15, I would skip school to go to the 'adult' library and read 'adult' books - the beats, 'new' journalism, existentialism. I felt like I understood what their amphetamine brains were talking about.

I also realized I loved stealing books.

I started stealing from the library with ease, which evolved into stealing from the big chain bookstore downtown. That was just as easy - find the little paper with the aluminum foil alert and toss that out. Just walk out. Boom. That 30\$ hardcover is mine, was always mine, you can't prove anything.

I eventually found a job that afforded me the luxury of buying these books. Thankfully, because I was getting worse and worse at holding it together in a world of CCTV cameras and secret shoppers.

The walk to the bookstore is a reward for a long work week, a cure for a depressing morning, and a positive exercise while waiting for your iPhone screen to be replaced.

There is always something you could use - the list never gets smaller, as every book read requires at least two more for context. If the book was very good, increase that to five: the author's previous book, their newest, the book that influenced it, a book mentioned, and a book influenced

I unplugged the computer at 11:59 and plugged it back in at 12:01. We survived Y2K. There was no techno-apocalypse that we were promised. I bounced between the TV and online news, trying to figure out what - if anything - happened. There was nothing. It was January 1st, 2000. There was no end of the world in sight.

Nothing changed for a while. I was using Napster to download Eminem songs and my mom was fucking guys she found on Match.com. The computer remained occupied.

It takes me some time to find this place on Google Maps. The way I remember it is not how it really is. I can picture a graveyard. I don't know how close or far that really is. 'Just beyond the bend,' my brain says to me. I don't remember what that means, but I remember hearing it. The whole damn town is named 'Horseshoe Bend.'

I pick a point on Highway 289 and click forward, looking for the gravel driveway. I click around for 40 minutes and decide it's been destroyed - sold, new owners took everything identifiable down.

Satellite view leads me to believe the animals are mostly gone. I search through the fields and see haystacks but the cows are definitely gone. The cows that would be there are not even cows I would have known, but there is nothing to be seen.

I find a pen with what appears to be three horses. I can see a trampoline.

I realize I never explored the land, really. I don't think I cared. I never considered going for a walk. I remember seeing the dead animal boneyard and not liking that place.

I remember seeing a mama horse, dead from colic after giving birth, being loaded into the scoop of a backhoe and rolled away. I watched it slowly proceed into the woods, noting to myself to not go there.

I zoom out and look for other identifiable landmarks. I remember the long back street to take me to the only paved patch of ground where we would skateboard. I remember now that the pavilion was named 'Veteran's Park,' which is probably why we were constantly bothered by the cops for being there.

I receive three spam phone calls a day, alerting me that i'm going to jail for some crime that nobody is positive of. They tell me to have my social insurance number ready to hand over to an agent.

I was depressed and addicted to eating fast food. It's not like I was getting fat or binging or whatever, but it was the only thing I craved. I wanted mozzarella sticks from Burger King. I wanted a crunchwrap supreme from Taco Bell. I wanted junk food and I wanted it to be cheap and shitty and I didn't want to think about it.

I remember my first night in my new apartment. I ate half an avocado with a pocket knife. I forgot to buy salt, so it - well, it tasted like avocado. I kept cereal and milk and one bowl on my desk, and I would clean the single dirty dish in the shower.

I would go to the one 'famous' pizza place, Tony or Nick's or whatever - I would go there a lot. I learned the system of ordering pretty quickly. I never felt confident enough to sit and eat, though. I would order my slice and eat it on the walk home. I still do this - to me, this makes sense.

I'm writing about my utilitarian relationship with food.

Everybody loved Anthony Bourdain. I had an eating disorder. I was depressed. I watched Bourdain on TV. I would maybe eat arugula and one scrambled egg with lots of hot sauce. I can't remember anything else I ate during this point of my life.

I made tortillas from scratch. They didn't taste any better than the ones you'd buy at the store.

I would eat powdered donuts for breakfast. I would do this five days a week.

I never remember anything else.

I am an organized hoarder, a collector with a perverse attraction to pieces of paper. Before Alexa, there was a point where every wall was covered with something - paintings, photographs, notes to myself, a DIY posterboard greenscreen. It was too much chaos, she said. It was too hard to relax with all this visual stimuli, she said. Only now, as I glance through a house that with roughly 2/1 the walls covered. Everything had to be above eye level, she says. This is now true-ish, with the exception of one wall in the kitchen and the bathroom, which remains completely covered in nonsense - one painting, five photographs, one burnt silk screen, one extra large 'starter' brand vinyl display, and countless framed stickers from tagger friends.

My house has petrified repairmen and cleaners for years. I have a massive print of a man pointing a gun at a homeless man's head above my couch. It somehow gets worse. I have a blown up print of a cocaine bag with LeBron James dunking on it. Lots of naked women. I really liked Helmut Newton and drugs and graffiti. Drugs and Newton and graffiti. If you don't like those two things, you probably will not like my house.

My friend says my house looks like a drug dealer's. He says there are too many things, too many expensive things. I disagree. I think my house looks like a grown up's that never had to grow up. I have expensive music gear that I got for cheap off Craigslist. I have Simpson's memorabilia from my early vintage-buying days. I think it's just that there is a lot of everything. Drug dealers waste their money. I'm a bartender.

On the train:

- A person edits their fantasy football team.
- Someone watches American Dad or Family Guy, i'm not sure which.
- A rich kid plays Zelda on a Nintendo Switch.
- A woman holds a romance novel on her lap, but never opens it.
- Everyone else is looking at their phone, despite there being no reception.

I also am staring at my phone as I type this out.

The big Alaskan Husky dog carries a kitten in his mouth, down the steps and into the grass. Peg says it's fine, they're both fine with this arrangement. I run down the embankment and kick the dog in the side until he drops the kitten. I didn't kick the dog very hard, but I did throw him a few more blows after the cat had run to safety.

I decided that I hate dogs.

I knew two farm dogs and one indoor dog. The indoor dog looked like a fox. I google 'what breed of dog looks like a fox' and am dissatisfied with labelling her any of the breeds I see. Maybe she was just a fox that lived indoors.

I knew a boy named Stacy. I was scared to call him by his name because the tone of my voice usually leads people to thinking i'm making fun of them. He was unbelievably ugly in the way that young men that grow up with no parental guidance become ugly - dirty and disheveled, a tattoo on his hand of a small skull with a crack through it.

You would sing along to every song in the nightclubs and bars, everyone thought you were charming. You never brought a wallet but would have a pocket full of cash - one 100\$ bill on the outside, 1000\$ in twenties on the inside. A nice plump wad of cash. This was important, because someone might look. You were never afraid of being robbed, because you know that would never happen to you.

You were drinking high-acid white wine and would drink it fast.  
You weren't good at playing cards but still, you tried.

It was easy to stay awake because sleeping was no fun.

"I have to write in a bar, I need noise."  
"Well, I haven't gotten much work done lately."

Should I read something silly and soft? Something rough and worthwhile?

I opt for something mindless and decide i've worked hard enough to start drinking. Gin, refreshing, not-too-sweet.

Some of the names have been changed.  
In fact, most of these people don't exist.

"I didn't do the attacks. No evidence."

Burn like fire, burn like fire in Cairo.

The room settles black for the first time in hours. The DJ plays a new-wave hit at 33 instead of 45, which means he wants to leave the decks to do something. Everyone is preoccupied ordering drinks or settling against the wall with their catch of the night, and the music is just a layer of sound to scream over.

"This is my move! Play the record slow! I always do this! Screwed, not chopped! Slow!"  
"What?"  
"You take me in your arms and start to burn!"

Nobody knows this song; nobody really likes it either. Nobody cares.

Three rich kids patrol the floor, asking everyone if they 'know a guy that can help them out.'

Nobody knows anything, nobody ever knows anything. Nobody cares.

The bartender gestures to the bouncer, and the bouncer moves on to the kids. They argue and complain but they leave on their feet.

"BELA LUGOSI'S DEAD."

The inferno at a club called the Station was the deadliest nightclub fire in the United States in 25 years and one of the worst in the country's history, with the death toll exceeding that of the 1990 Happy Land social club fire in the Bronx, which killed 87.

A man wearing a hoax explosive device went on a stabbing spree, killing two and wounding three others before he was shot and killed by police.

The attack started at a local conference venue and police were called to the scene at 1:58 p.m. local time. Five minutes later, police confronted the attacker, she said, adding that members of the public showed "extraordinary courage" by stepping in to tackle him.

Terror Couple Kills Colonel.

Peach schnapps reminds me of pretending to be drunk when I was at sleepover camp.

Every woman i've every loved was devoted to going to the gym.

I'm irrationally afraid of small towns.  
An Easy Rider 'you ain't from around here' fear.

I fantasize - I mean; I think - about a plane crashing into the CN Tower. It could happen. It probably won't happen. It's unlikely to happen in my lifetime. I mean, it happened in New York. If it happened there, it could happen anywhere. It'd be awful if it happened, but if it did happen - what would I do?

I'd - well - ok. I'm not sure.

I can see the CN Tower from my house- I have a good view, yeah. Maybe i'd set up a camera to film the smoke like Basinski did. I'd probably get on my cheap everyday commuter bike and head down town. I'd put camera gear in my basket, probably all of it - the awful old dSLR, the Nikon with the fisheye, the Sony DV camcorder that skips. I'd probably have to stop a lot on the way down, i'm sure traffic will be bad. There would be pandemonium, no? I imagine. An awful thing just happened. Freak out.

I love the beauty mark on my left ear.  
I consider it a premiere part of me.

I lied about reading Lyotard when I was 18 because I could never find his books.

Now, I buy every copy of 'The Postmodern Condition' I find.

I was very bad at school because I was bored.  
I liked doing too many other things.

I liked not being at school.

I worry because bad things happen.  
You read the newspaper.

It's delicate - this whole thing.

Satan finds some mischief for idle hands like mine. Idle hands and an empty mind as I watch Netflix. You win, I lose. I leave, you stay.

Before I continue, before I convince you otherwise -

I am not cleaning myself up for easy consumption.  
For the joy of the many.

I'm just demonstrating modern techniques for classic problems.

Let us consider the ethics of work, of necessity, of providing services:  
I'm being superstitious.

The complaints are clear: I'm bored, I'm hungry, I wish we went somewhere else.

I can't get any work done because the tourists have occupied my neighborhood. They've raised sandwich prices \$2 since the summer. They stall in line at the coffee shop, backpacks swinging.

Just a few short years ago, everything was dangerous and everything sucked. There was one coffee shop and one bar and one sandwich place. Now, everything is a manufactured concept designed to draw the uptown crowd to the west-south-west.

Someone is Googling directions. I hate when people say "Bloor Street" instead of just "Bloor."

I was horny last night and early this morning. I was also depressed. I don't know. Maybe I was neither of those things. The older I get, the harder it is to decide how I feel.

I suppose I should be horny, so if anyone asks - I am.

The doctor says I have a problem with my blood. My blood doesn't have enough oxygen in it, so I yawn and yawn and get dizzy. I drink juice to solve this problem. It doesn't really work. I bought a herbal tincture designed to fix this problem. It made me cough up purple-black phlegm, which I hear is a good thing.

A naturopath suggests I do a blood detox. Detox my blood. Like bloodletting? No, like - like, clean your blood. Ok. She said to eat beets.

I'm supposed to tell you about the weather. The weather is important to set the mood. Well, it's January. It's cold, but not awful. Maybe that's the climate change thing.

Snow doesn't bother me. It keeps me from doing bad things.

Not that I do bad things anymore.

My smart watch vibrates, telling me my heart rate is increasing. It suggests I practice some breathing exercises. I dismiss the alert and stare out the

window.

I've decided that I have to stay off my phone during non-working hours. I can revolt against capitalism by using my time at work to stare mindlessly into the never ending depths of Instagram. I will scroll on the company dime. My free time must be free. This was supposed to be my new year's resolution. We're halfway through January and I haven't changed.

I must focus. I've got to do better.

I admit, it's been a hectic few weeks. Work, social obligations, arguments. The things that follow the holidays. Paying December's bills with January's work. I had spent all my savings by accident - I didn't think about it. It just disappeared. I had planned to save \$100 very day, whether or not I worked. Just put aside \$100 every day.  $\$100 \times 365 \text{ days} = \$36,500$ . Wouldn't that be nice?

I think about supplementing my income with freelancing again. Even though I spend most of my time sourcing jobs that can't afford to hire me, it's still a worthwhile effort. It doesn't feel like work. It's sending emails asking if they've received my invoice.

I should start selling some of my camera gear on Craigslist. Sell some rare records on Discogs. It might be smart to do this in spring, though.

Everyone is just as broke as me.

I take out my notebook and make a map of my apartment. I reorganize the house in my mind. There must be a better way to manage my clothes. There must be something I can do in my studio space. I google "IKEA storage solutions" and review products i'm already aware of.

I'm spending money again.

On my way to work, I order a slice of pizza. I eat it as I rush down the street, leaving a mess of red on my jacket sleeve. I feel it lingering in my teeth. It's gross. I feel gross. Why am I eating like it's an emergency? Nobody is going to steal my slice before I get to work.

My testicles have felt more swollen lately. Do I have cancer? Or am I just

extremely virile? Maybe i'm sick. I can't go to the doctor, I don't want to know.

I'm sitting at my laptop with the WiFi turned off. I see my reflection in the screen.

I should have shaved before I left the house. I should make some effort to look presentable. I paw at the week-old stubble, feeling pimples running along the follicles and my hands close around my throat as if to strangle myself. I've gotten lazy. I must be depressed.

I close my laptop and look into my notebook. I consider a 'get-rich-quick' scheme. Start an online business. Maybe I should sell t-shirts again. That sounds awful.

Maybe I should focus on the work that I have.

I could be a bartender with a big smile. Turn that %15 tip into %18. I could try being friendly. I could pretend to give a shit. I could do my job better.

I could clean up. I could get a grown-up's hair cut. I'm 32 with a bleached-blond proto-mullet. I wear dirty clothes to work to consolidate the stains. I have two pairs of jeans and 200 t-shirts. I shower every few days. It's not that i've given up. I'm just distracted.

I need to keep reading. If I read, I can write. The more I read, the smarter I am. The smarter I am, the better I can write. I believe this is how the process goes. This is not particularly rewarding.

I cannot pay my bills with my clever wordplay.

My work desk has a stack of notebooks of varying sizes. The difference in the size is designed for the different work in process: the smallest notebook is for poems and idioms and the clutter of responding to the day. The medium books are for the 'serious work.' They take a lot longer to fill. I don't know what I mean when I say 'serious.' The big, black hardcover books get filled when I get excited about a project. They become a book in itself. They get filled, they get transcribed, and they get left at the reference library.

I've been 'donating' completed notebooks to the library without them knowing. I figure that they might have some value when I eventually die. Maybe someone will find them compelling. Insightful, even.

This is totally normal behavior.

We argue about the future. What work will we do tomorrow to secure a better future for our eventual family? I tell her that i'm content with our wages. This is the wrong answer. She tells me that we can be rich on her family's farm. I tell her I don't want to be rich. This is also the wrong answer.

I think of work and obligation as pleasures of living. I thrive with routine and responsibility. I worry that I will drink myself to death if I have nothing to do. It's nearly happened once! Everyone is scared of the future, but I am also scared of today.

This is why I like to go to work. It's security. If I go to work today, then I get the privilege of going to work tomorrow. Sorry, but we live under late-stage capitalism. I have no choice but to participate.

I should cut carbs out of my diet. I should stop drinking soda. All the things I like are bad for me.

All the things I like, I will grow to hate. I love completely. I gaze with indifference at my keyboard. My laptop is a breeding ground for bacteria.

I puff on my electronic cigarette and google the vaporwave LP I saw at the record store a moment ago. I exhale into my sweater and notice my breath smells awful. I wonder how long this has been the case. I do not need to buy any new records, but I always want to buy new records.

I consider changing my look for spring. Maybe this year i'll wear fitness gear all the time. Trade in my jeans for swishy nylon Nike shorts. Activewear. I've decided to abandon my brand.

I realize i'm slowly getting priced out of my city, but I cannot think of a form of employment for me elsewhere. Maybe I can go on unemployment. Disability? I can probably sweet talk myself into a borderline personality disorder diagnosis.

Twelve months ago, I weight 115lbs. Now, I weigh about 125 maybe. Somewhere around that - maybe 140. Yo-yo weight loss and gain is just one of my quirks.

Taking drugs goes from fun to unfun, occasional to routine - as if waking up is a good enough reason to start again.

"Still water."

"Yeah, well, it is still just water. As in, i'm glad that this is still water."

I put my hand out to wave down a cab, feeling like a crime television re-run - as if this was a bad idea.

In my past life, I was a persistent anti-capitalist in practice. I was a late adapter to smartphones and Macbooks. I didn't care much until I didn't care at all - where I stopped doing anything except what I socially should. I got the Macbook and the iPhone. I wound up normal.

I look around at all the other writers at this AA meeting. I look at one particular guy I know and I know he knows me too - we still ignore each other. We know the other writer will write about these moments in a situation comedy context.

"Everyone is fucked, including me."

Seventeen years ago, I had my first major concussion. It's not a good story, but it's one i've told many times regardless. The intensity of this incident, from a casual injury to a life-threatening debacle, varies depending on who i'm trying to impress or if i've been drinking.

The novelty of this memory is that the narrative is flexible.

I do believe I was almost accidentally murdered on purpose with the intent to harm or injure or kill.

My little head bounced off the once-concrete-now-gravel and I took a nap. My leg got caught in some mechanism that knocked my shoe off and burnt through the top of my foot, searing sock cotton into the wound.

It was probably intended as some sort-of 'Jackass' skit. A prank. After all, we were unsupervised teens and it was the early 2000's. I was playing with the big kids.

I got tangled up and fell asleep for a few moments. I woke up fully-dressed in a stranger's bath tub. I didn't remember where I lived, what my phone number was, but I remembered I had a problem with my thin blood - which meant there was going to be a lot of it.

As the Kool-Aid color framed my face like it did Carrie, I started to freak out.

Someone put me in a car and told me I was going home. I suggested the hospital, forgetting I was in America - home, it is. They wrapped my head and leg in plastic garbage bags to help contain the blood from the grey upholstery in the back seat of someone's Civic.

I knew my mom was going to be very mad at me. She would give me the usual "for a smart kid, you do some stupid things." She was right with that one, but I didn't want to hear it until I stopped bleeding, at least.

Instead, she said - "You took ten years off my life with all of this stress."

I was helped into the house by a grown-up man and woman that i've never met before or seen after, or maybe I just lost this part because my brain was slush. They held me up like an athlete injured mid-game, with my

right knee bent upwards as my foot dangled lifelessly.

I was put in the bathtub with a too-small hand towel covering my dick and balls. The towel just floated, barely covering my cowering privates. Thankfully, this provided me enough shame to last me the rest of my life. The only saving grace was that my waist-down was slowly obscuring by the ratio for blood-to-water in the surrounding area.

My mom picked gravel and dirt from my foot and cried. She was adamant that we could not go to the doctor, because we could not afford it. I think this made her cry harder. I didn't really care about going to the hospital anymore. I just wanted to go to sleep.

Whatever part of my brain that makes me speak hadn't turned back on yet, so I relied on "mmm" and "eugh" to get my messages out. I know this because my mom brought it up to me many times as an adult. She thought I was doing to die in the bathtub, but she couldn't figure out what to do.

"Well, why didn't you just bring me to the fucking hospital!"

Well, she knew she **SHOULD** do that, but she felt like she couldn't - like it would devastate our family financially. I receive appropriate medical attention and cripple my family financially.

She made the right call. So, anyways -

After the second time I fell asleep in the bath, it was decided that I shouldn't drown and I should probably lay down on the couch. She kept saying "DON'T FALL ASLEEP" which made me even more tired. She brought me my discman and I listened to The Downward Spiral to keep me awake.

Eventually, I did fall asleep - but I woke up. I was fine. Dizzy, sore, but fine.

I have a crater-shaped scar on my foot. It's not that bad. I haven't seen what my head scar looks like, but I bet it's gross. I feel it sometimes, scratching the back of my head. It creeps me out so I avoid touching that spot.

What was I talking about?

I was all kinds of fucked up when I first met health food store girl.

Despite being too hung over and coke-sad to speak, the nice man at the corner store would pull two packs of out for me whenever he saw me come in. I would go and buy a juice, I felt like it would balance me out. Plus, it was expensive, which meant it was good. It would help me from the inside out. I grabbed the green juice and saw the tall, dark hair, big fucking angel of a woman - the health food store woman.

I probably looked like a murderer because she talked very softly to me. I felt embarrassed because of how ugly I was and couldn't manage asking for a coffee. I tipped 5\$ on my 10\$ juice and left in a hurry. I did this every day.

We went to three fancy places because I wanted to show off. I wanted to demonstrate that I was a very important man. We had our first kiss on the steps of a restaurant that no longer exists. I wrote our names together in white-out on every wall in Chinatown. We made out in the cab but I was too drunk and scared to have sex.

Since the beginning, she would keep her eyes open when we would kiss.

I had stopped trying to destroy myself in a conventional manner, so I started getting my mood out in 'untethered fits of rage.'

I broke a few paintings over my knee. I punched myself in the face until the early stages of a black eye revealed itself, and then punched myself continually in that perfect spot.

I was 'very upset' but I couldn't figure out why. I would frantically explain that 'you're not listening' while I screamed about nothing.

'I'm doing this for you.'

I think I was having some problems adjusting to a more-sober-but-not-completely-but-drug-free-at-least lifestyle.

It was 2013, January 4th, my 25th birthday. I was in Montreal by mistake. Montreal was like - like being in Alaska, I could imagine. I could imagine it being like that. I was not prepared, because I didn't know. There is no way I could have known.

I was unprepared and already depressed from a miserable set of holidays and I suppose I quit my job while surviving off small royalty cheques. I was dumb, I knew I was dumb, and I was fucked, and I knew it.

In 2013, I was very close to moving to San Francisco in what would have, undoubtedly, been a huge disaster.

I needed a change.

I was open to either coast - SF, LA, or NY. I didn't care where I went, but I was aware of things such as 'distance' and 'the cost.' I knew that I would have to fly to the west coast, and I had developed some awful, unnameable fear of the whole 'travelling' thing. 'Travelling' being the system of flying - getting to the airport, clearing customs, why are you here, what are you doing, making the flight, getting a cab to your new home. Standard things, sure - standard things I hate.

I believe my irrational fear of flying comes from a fear of being 'detained.' Irrational, because there is 'no just cause' for me to be detained. Still, it has happened to me before - being held in airport jail or denied entry entirely. Why? Well, someone had to meet their quota of refusals.

Airports are a place that make me feel like a criminal, even though i've done nothing wrong.

The remote apartment search first landed me a place in SF - unsurprisingly, above a gallery. My friend and occasional collaborator Shawn had a lead on a place in the Tenderloin - I believe it was his old place, as he had moved into the back room of the gallery below. \$1000, which seemed reasonable. My monthly income was around \$2-3k so - yeah, but - I also didn't really have any savings. To say this was an impulse decision is an understatement. I don't even recall why I thought moving was a good idea.

I needed a change, I thought.

I had a decent day job, and was making good money through freelance gigs - I wasn't even depressed! I was healthy, happy, and fulfilled. I think this was the best my life had been - but, but, but - human nature intervenes, telling you 'you need more, you deserve more, go get it.'

I had decided YES to SF, I would make it work.

I looked at flights, quickly realizing I would not make it work.

As a journalist, as a reporter - I just write about me.  
Poets need full-time jobs in the service sector.

Wine, as a signifier of class and knowledge.  
Even getting drunk has been ruined for me.

Will I ever get smarter or is that part of the scam?

Time management: less time for 'doing.'

Enjoying idle habits:  
going to bed early, waking up late.

I spend days just thinking, writing none of those thoughts down.

I should focus on reading. I should take a break.  
I think about this every few weeks.

Every time I try to quit smoking, I think that I need a break.

Costco Biscotti as a symbol of my mid-teens.

I am the kind-of person to spill coffee on my books, which is why I don't  
borrow them.

I'm talking about the writer as a labourer.

Getting your money's worth.

Why should I preen around as 'the man in the Montclair jacket' if I don't  
desire that lifestyle? What part of the brainwashing worked to where these  
status symbols mean something to me?

The YouTube autoplay algorithm takes me from Lou Reed to the Strokes,  
and I fixate on Julian Casablancas' dirty white sneakers. As a millionaire, it  
works in reverse - his shoes, assumingly faux-distressed, attempt to portray  
him as a 'regular guy.' Someone just like us.

Since he is a normal guy, I will listen to whatever he has to say.

His studded white leather jacket doesn't look like what i'd find at a punk show, however. It resembles more of an H&M sales rack option. It's too normal.

Allow me to turn to the regular person standing at the bar, ordering a simple drink. A gin and tonic, I think. His pants are covered in paint - everywhere a smear of something that shouldn't be there. However, this man hasn't worked on a painting in weeks. His paint-speckled Levi's are a working-class badge of honor - dirt represents work.

Even if he isn't working.

I can say that retail therapy is an objectively negative thing that contributes to a system I supposedly dislike. I am aware that I want expensive jeans because they are expensive. I want what they represent. I want clean Jordan 1's to make up from my adult pimples and frown lines.

I hope the costume works, and everyone notices my clothes instead of the person wearing them.

You meet at a hotel - well, the hotel bar. It was early, the cavernous dining room had one or two busboys rolling cutlery into napkins, but they didn't acknowledge you at all. You're gestured to 'sit wherever,' which is why you decided to take a booth set for 12. Leaving several empty plates and glasses between us seemed like the logical thing to do.

I ordered an aperol and soda because I wasn't supposed to be drinking. You ordered the same, because that is what we always did. 'Whatever' times two. Throwing up a peace sign indicating 'might as well make two if you're going to make one.'

I paid for our drinks and went for a float in a high-salt tub of lukewarm water. Athletes do it. I hear it's good for relieving stress.

Idle brain-dead pdf staring and not making eye contact when I talk and the usual stomach ache again. eyes go back to my phone and back outside.

It's pitch black, raining.

I'm damp and will continue to be damp.

The money thing, you know.

I wound up finding a place in NY off Facebook. A friend of a friend had a friend with an extra room - also 1000\$, but I could get there without flying. I could make it work.

I said "yep, uh huh, i'm in" and starting packing.

At this point, I had a complete adult life and adult 'home.' I had pots and pans and a cat and lots of books and nice furniture and no future. I had a plan to go away, make it up as I go along, and make it big.

Everything was sold, cheap cheap estate sale cheap. I've died, please come clear out this house. Whatever wasn't sold was packed into storage within a few days of making this impulsive life-altering choice that was the best idea.

The cat, my cat, the love of my life - she was the big issue. She was going to stay with a mom until I could bring her over in the wintertime. This made me cry. This kept me crying.

I had two bags to travel with, both being far too large for me to handle. I figured my big expense would be to cab from bus station to my house, thus making this difficult bag issue easier. There, I had made a plan. I knew a few people heading to America in a few weeks - not really close to NY, but at least over the boarder. Plus, they had a truck. I'd made plan number two: i'd ride with them, have a little adventure, and then bus it into NY when I was ready.

If my memory serves me right, I had about \$2000. I also had no impulse control.

This plan, this very rough plan, was to leave Toronto on the Monday, stay one night in Montreal, cross the border into the States on Tuesday, camp in the Appalachian Mountains that night, drive nowhere in particular in Maine on Wednesday, and continue this no-explicit-purpose trip 'until it was done.'

It was loose enough to work.  
"The road." "Freedom."

My mom used to say that my first words were "I'm going to kill myself."

My siblings and I, we don't really talk. We have an instagram group chat where we share photos of our cats, that's about as much of each other as we can stand. It's a fantastic agreement for all parties involved. We see each other maybe once every few years - and I needed a dogsitter for the weekend, so I'm overdue for a visit.

So, why on earth did i corner my sister for details on our mom's death?

Well, well, well.

I just wanted her to tell me if she died from a mysterious disease that she didn't disclose, if the cancer got her - is this something i need to watch for in my own life.

Or did she kill herself, like I thought.

My mom used to say that i came out of the womb and didn't cry. I just looked up at the doctor and said "I'm going to kill myself."

My sister cried and she said the toxicology reports indicated she drank antifreeze or brake fluid, I can't remember because I felt dizzy and wasn't listening anymore. I watched her eyes instead of listening to her words. She told me how my brother found her in bed, how she has pissed the bed and puked and blood somehow and he still tried to do CPR. That part made me dizzier. She went on but I watched her eyes twitch and I knew she was there in her mind - I asked her to stop.

My mom was so used to me threatening to kill myself, she stopped responding to me altogether.

My sister stopped crying and told me how she tried to kill herself, how my brother has been trying to kill himself. I told her about me overdosing. we had a small laugh of solidarity.

My mom had no idea that I 'accidentally' almost killed myself twice. I didn't do a very good job at almost doing anything. It was a botched job before it started.

I couldn't tell you what day of what month she died. I don't care to know and I don't care to remember.

I look down at my left wrist at the traditional 'mum' tattoo and think of what i could cover it up with. I don't have any good ideas - I never have good ideas. In my past life, I had loved having a 'mum' tattoo on my left wrist and not a 'dad' tattoo on the opposing side. I felt like that got a message across. Now that I hate that message, I wish I just had a black flag tattoo instead.

I grit my teeth and walk to the grocery store. I realize that it doesn't matter and this woman has been dead for too long for me to be so worked up about her. She's dead, that's fine - and I have to buy some bread and milk.

I have to go to Montreal for a few days.

I will climb up the mountain in the middle of the city.  
I believe the mountain is called "Mont Royal."

I've climbed up so many times, but I would like to again.

Yes, i've been avoiding leaving the city. No, i'm not sure why.  
I think I haven't been feeling well.

We need to buy clothes and eat somewhere new.  
We always have lots of sex on vacation.  
We need some time away from the pets and the papers and the bills and  
the work.

Our home is too hectic for us to be normal.  
There is always a problem.

There's always a new mess or a new noise and I sit at my desk and stare  
into my computer, doing nothing.

I can do nothing somewhere else every once in a while.

Since I stopped taking photographs, I don't work on vacation.

Our last vacation was marred by rain, no tv, no computer, no relax.  
Just bored and cold.

All previous vacations were objectively fun, if not expensive.  
Vacationing in places where I do not speak the dominant language.

I read English books in French cafes.  
I drink French wine in English bars.

I keep telling you, I don't drink that much anymore!

My pain collects like white sugar at the bottom of gas station coffee!

Things are different now.  
Now, we take the train.

I do not want to travel far.  
I do not want to take a plane.

I have a dog, a cat, a job.  
I have not enough time off.

Life has given me guidelines.

My problems are not problems, but success framed as inconvenience.

I don't remember the month, but I remember it being cold.  
It was cold and we drank beers on the ferris wheel.

Why was there was a ferris wheel in the middle of the street?

In a previous life, I travelled to places that would confiscate the novels in my luggage.  
In a previous life, I was not me yet.

I do not see me from ten years ago when I look into the mirror.  
I fixate on my teeth, instead.

The obligation to relax stresses me out.

I book a dentist appointment for when I return.

In the future, it's you who leaves and me who stays.

I am not taking anything I don't need.  
I don't need a bag of cameras.

I'm grown up.

I don't need to take any photographs that I haven't already taken.

I could never be serious about a thing like that.

I live in fear of vacation because i've found myself stuck -  
stuck on vacation, in my mind and in my life.

I don't want to repeat myself.

Pleasure, not business.

I could never be serious on vacation.

When I say that I don't remember my childhood, people tend to take it as a signifier that I was abused or molested or suffered something awful. Even if something like that happened, I don't remember - so it doesn't bother me.

I'm aware that I don't remember much, and even the few memories I have feel false - I think i've been told that these things have happened to me, and I have cemented them with my own anecdotal evidence.

I moved a lot, so I couldn't tell you where I lived in a specific year without the aid of a pen and paper. I was quiet and kept to myself, so I couldn't recall the names of any specific friends or classmates.

I could tell you that I remember my brother being hit by a car and telling my mom I didn't believe in God anymore. I remember seeing a ghost in my grandma's house. My first 'real' skateboard was a Birdhouse Heath Kirchart pro model. My interchangeable nicknames were 'Canada' and 'Fag' when I first moved to America.

I couldn't tell you if I was happy or unhappy. I simply don't know.

Again, I have no 'post-traumatic amnesia' that i'm aware of. I don't really talk to my living family or hold close relationships with anyone, so perhaps it's just a result of not needing to contextualize relationships by 'going back in time.'

I don't care to stroll down memory lane, reminiscing of the times we had cookies by the fire or that beautiful ski trip over Christmas 1998. I know I didn't do anything like that. My memories would be simple, humble, and unromantic. With a quick toss into the waste basket, I dispose of these thoughts that belong to everyone.

I can say, without a doubt, that I liked Pogs and Playstation and hockey and junk food and

My memories aren't mine because they are not unique. I remember being poor and doing without things that normal people had. I grew up from a poor child into a poor adult, and was thankful that I had learned how to shoplift and how to make \$5 in groceries last a week. Or maybe I just don't care.

We were Dean Moriarty and Sal Paradise, but i'm not sure who was who. I think we switched roles often.

We both preferred the last name 'Paradise.'

Sal, the writer, and carefree Dean.

I can tell you who I think I was.

The last time I saw my mom, we went for lunch somewhere - wherever - some place unremarkable. We had a normal lunch and a few drinks. I suggested we go to the bar by my house, as it was my usual early day drinking spot.

It was also easy for me to pick up there.

I thought, "maybe I shouldn't do cocaine in front of my mom."  
I also thought, "you're too smart to get caught."

So, I did what I usually do - as much cocaine as I could handle, as quick as possible.

I came up from the washroom and finished all of my family member's drinks.

I suggested we stop back at my house, so I could give her back her denim jacket I borrowed a few months back on a colder-than-anticipated night. She said she didn't need it, and it was now officially mine.

We kissed and hugged and I got her on the subway, and I went back to the bar.

In a totally unrelated event, she killed herself a couple of days later.

She knew I was fucked up that day, and that is the picture of me she decided to take with her.

At this point, I was an employed junkie faking his way through an art career. I would find my work not being sold, so it stockpiled- I just kept doing it.

My assignments became scattered, when they weren't completely fictitious.

I was getting very good at being a functioning alcoholic at this point. I wouldn't flinch when I tossed whisky shots, and I would have a lot of them. I hate the taste but I like the gesture, the movement of glass in the air and tapped back on the table, kissed to my lips, and tapped back down twice. I could drink from 11am to 5am daily, and I gladly did so. I was selling bottles of Sagrantino di Montefalco at \$150 while skimming my tips, keeping all the cash as the credit card tips usually balanced out my end of day report. I would usually call my dealer at 9:30, having him arrive at 10 when I started slowing down. I'd stay awake and lively until 'the party was over.' I would sleep on the floor or the couch, whichever helped with the spins. I would have whatever drugs I didn't do in the morning for breakfast, with an egg and cheese bagel.

"I'm not drunk, i'm just tired."

I was always either drunk, or about to be drunk.

The gate opens slowly as you pass. This is how you know you're high. The gate hasn't moved at all, you're just paranoid. You look back and see the gate is still closed.

You cross the street, away from the scary gate and whatever lies behind it.

The gate closes slowly as you pass. This is how you know you're high. The gate hasn't moved at all, you're just paranoid. You look back and see the gate is still open.

Your left arm is numb but it's been like this for a week, maybe two. You thought you were having a stroke or maybe have some neurological damage but your googling has told you it's anxiety. Something like that.

The world is soft, gentle, and fucking depressing.

She was pretty, well-adjusted, average height, skinny without an eating disorder. She would read the New York Times in bed, in the first few moments of waking up. The kind of woman who would walk until she was tired, and then cab back home. Strong-willed, stubborn, always working on something mysterious, constantly researching her obsessions. Sitting calmly and petting the cat.

She preferred to dine out.

